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# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 4, 2023

The Honorable Gina Raimondo  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo:

I write today in support of the application from The City of Allentown for funding from the Distressed Area Recompete Pilot Program. I understand that The City of Allentown is applying for a strategy development grant as well as approval of a Recompete plan. I urge you to give this application full and fair consideration.

The Recompete Pilot Program reflects an increased commitment at the federal level to spurring economic development in communities that have long been left behind. By making large, place-based investments tailored toward communities with a high prime-age employment gap, the program prioritizes job creation for residents, creating a unique opportunity for persistently distressed communities to harness their potential by leveraging local resources and partnerships.

The City of Allentown tells me that, due to an ongoing economic resurgence, they have both acute needs as well as timely opportunity to utilize funding from the Recompete Program. I understand that their plan has identified clear, locally-specific barriers to prime age employment, prime among them transportation, education and skills requirements, and access to childcare. The City has explained that if these barriers go unaddressed, the City will not be able to grow equitably and the economic growth of the region will be threatened. I am told that local stakeholders view Recompete funding and the potential projects they could utilize it for—such as expanded off-peak childcare hours, the expansion of apprenticeship programs, and supplemental transit service to employment centers—as a critical opportunity to move towards equity, growth, and economic justice in Allentown.

As Senator of Pennsylvania, I have worked with communities across the Commonwealth that once thrived but now find themselves in need of new ways to generate economic growth and support working families. Recent legislation, including the CHIPS and Science Act, reaches for these communities by extending new federal resources to help drive locally rooted, sustainable economic growth. It is critical that these types of transformational investments come to Pennsylvania, including for projects in communities such as Allentown.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration. Please include this letter in the official record of the application. Consistent with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, I also respectfully request that you keep me informed of the status of this grant application. Finally, if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact me or my staff at (202) 224-4195.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator